

WHEN A PERSON MAY BE AT RISK OF SUICIDE

Sudden changes in their usual pattern of relating to others

Withdrawing from family/friends, or not wanting to be left alone; not wanting to be touched; loss of interest in usual social activities; developing violent, argumentative or disruptive behaviour; loss of humour, or unusual change to acting the 'clown'.

Marked personal changes - Thoughts and feelings often experienced

Sense of hopelessness and/or helplessness, of having no control over one's life, persistently thinking things will never get better and that no-one can help; feeling overwhelmed by the expectations of oneself; loneliness, fear, feelings of abandonment and not being heard; consistently high levels of anxiety and/or anger; difficulty expressing emotions, difficulty expressing or accepting affection or having outbursts of uncontrolled anger; preoccupied with thoughts of death or dying; decline in school or work, disinterest in the future; apathy about dress and appearance; neglecting of personal hygiene.

Behaviour changes

Marked weight increase or decrease, lack of concentration, changes in sleeping pattern, delusions or hallucinations; sudden unexplained relief or happiness after a lengthy period of depression; accumulation of the means of suicide (stock piling medications)

Impulsive and/or risk-taking behaviours

Careless, accident-prone behaviours, taking personal risks, e.g. not looking after oneself when sick or playing 'chicken' on the road; increased or heavy use of alcohol or other drugs; running away from home, truanting

Making final arrangements

Making a will; giving away prized possessions (i.e., pets, jewellery); organising own funeral; saying good bye

Self-injury and suicide attempts

Self-mutilation, e.g. cigarette burns, cutting oneself, insertion, drug misuse; having made previous suicide attempt(s) is one of the most important and reliable indicators of risk

Verbal expressions of suicidal behaviour - direct or indirect

Making grandiose statements like, 'when I am gone, 'you will be sorry "I wish I were dead"; "You won't have to bother with me anymore"; "I'd like to go to sleep and never wake up".

Hearing and Supporting

Listen to the content of the words people are saying. Often the person is trying desperately to make sense of their situation or to change it in some way. They often feel isolated and unheard. Part of them wants to live but also part of them wants to live – they just want the pain to go away.

How to respond to a person

By showing your concern and care. Help the person express their thoughts and feelings. You can make a difference. Help them to achieve their needs in other ways and to seek help, don't keep the secret or assume that things 'will be okay'.

Appropriate Services and Self Help

If you think someone might harm themselves, seek help immediately by calling

- Suicide Call Back Service - 1300 659 467
- Take the person at risk to your local hospital emergency department.

Other numbers

Crisis Care	08 9223 1111
Kids Helpline (24 hours)	1800 551 800
Lifeline (24hours)	13 11 14
Men's Line (24 hours)	1300 789 978
Mental Health Emergency Response Line	1300 555 788
Rural Link	1800 552 002
Reach Out	

www.lifelinewa.org.au

www.mensline.org.au

www.reachout.com